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The Terre Haute Company

BY A. R. MARKLE, Terre Haute, Indiana.

ON the twelfth and thirteenth of September, 1816, Joseph Kitchell, of Jackson county, Indiana, entered at the Vincennes land office the east fractional sections of twenty-one and twenty-eight in township twelve north and range nine west, with eleven other parcels of land in what afterward became Vigo county. This was a part of the Harrison Purchase of September 30, 1809, at Fort Wayne, and was formally opened to entry and settlement by the proclamation of President Madison of May 1, 1816, which provided for sales to be held at Vincennes on the second Monday in September following and for three succeeding weeks.

Another proclamation of the same date allowed entries by the Canadian Volunteers, under the Act of March 5, 1816, to be made on and after the first Monday in June, and there were over 23,000 acres entered under that act, beginning with the entry of Major Abraham Markle of 800 acres on June 3, this being the first entry in the tract, and his being land Warrant number one under the act.

Kitchell disposed of his entries by an assignment to Cuthbert and Thomas Bullitt, of Louisville, Kentucky; Jonathan Lindley, of Orange county, Indiana; Abraham Markle, of Fort Harrison, and Hyacinth Laselle, of Vincennes, who entered into an agreement dated September 19, 1816, whereby the thirteen tracts were apportioned into twelve equal and undivided shares of which the Bullitts were the owners of two, Lindley four, Markle three and Laselle three. Further, in order that the payments for the land might be regularly made, they agreed that immediately on the execution of the agreement they would pay one-fourth of the purchase money, to wit: the sum of \$7,594.07 into the office of the receiver of public monies at Vincennes,—\$1,265.90 by the Bullitts, \$2,531.81 by Lindley, \$1,898.85 by Markle and \$1,898.85 by Laselle. A like amount was to be paid on or before the first of August in 1818, 1819 and 1820, and a default by any of the parties should forfeit his interest in the venture. They further agreed to make such disposition of

the lands as they might deem most advisable as soon as they conveniently could, arranged for a division of the profits on the first of June, 1818, and on the first of October of each year thereafter, and that any remaining unsold lands should be advertised July 1, 1821, and sold on the first of the following October with a final settlement of the proceeds in money, notes, bonds, dues and demands following such sale.

On this same date a power of attorney was given "our trusty friend, Joseph Kitchell, authorizing him to take possession of the lands and to lay out in town lots, in and out, such part thereof" as they or any three of them might direct. In accord with this plan Kitchell filed for record at Vincennes October 25, 1816, the plan of the future town, comprising 268 lots, a public square and two double-sized lots which were reserved for a church and school.

On the day following this agreement Major Markle sold to Eliakim Crosby, Eleazar Aspinwall and Harlow & Trimble three-quarters of his interest; September 25, Lindley sold seven-eighths of his interest to Joseph Kitchell, David Raymond, Henry Speed, William Hoggatt, Jonathan Lyons, John DePauw, and John Owens, while three days later, September 28, Laselle partitioned his three shares into twenty parts and sold portions to Truman Blackman, John Goodwin, Joseph Warner, Caleb Crawford, Andrew Himrod, M. and H. Recherville, Michel Broulliette, Pierre Broulliette, Modeset & Shields, John Dunn, Robert Harrison, John Carr, John R. Holloway, Charles Thompson, John Andrews, Pierre Laplante and John Long. Here we have within ten days of the agreement of the five men, and before a stake had been driven on the plat, thirty-five part owners.

The first sale of lots took place October 31, 1816, and the *Western Sun*, of Vincennes, said, November 9, that upwards of twenty-one thousand dollars worth were sold the first day. Many of these sales, if not all of them, were on credit, the larger part of them did not stay sold and for some time to come the stakes of the surveyor were the only evidences of the town of Terre Haute. It is true that six houses were built that fall and winter but at the time of the location of the county seat, in the spring of 1818, the owners were still able to donate forty-eight of the lots to the county as part payment for the location. We may be sure, too, that they did not give away all the lots that they owned at this time.

B. Johnson, sheriff of Sullivan county, advertised to be sold for

taxes sixty lots that were not highly valued, in the *Western Sun* of November 22, 1817, which would look like quick action on his part, for the patent was not yet issued for the land.

Within the company, many sales took place, for on April 16, 1817, John Holloway sold to Wilson and Pocock, Wilson assigning his interest to Pocock but acquiring, May 23, the interest of John Long; Eliakim Crosby sold to William Harlow, October 31; Henry Speed sold to the Bullitts, July 3, 1818; July 13, John Carr sold to Charles Smith; the next day Smith bought of John Dunn; October 3, Abraham Markle sold his remaining interest to Eleazar Aspinwall, this sale later confusing affairs for the company; October 15, John Owens sold to the Bullitts; June 28, 1819, Joseph Kitchell sold to Jonathan Lindley; October 23, Harlow sold his half interest in Harlow & Trimble's purchase to John Sheets. December 22, Thomas Bullitt sold to his brother Cuthbert the portion they had bought of Henry Speed and John Owens. June 6, 1820, Harlow sold his interest as the surviving partner of Harlow & Trimble to Gorham A. Worth of the Bank of the United States, this being a deed of trust to secure the payment of a note for \$6,300.00, which was evidently paid, for he again sold this share to John Sheets, January 30, 1821.

Meantime John Badollet, register of the land office at Vincennes, issued October 17, 1820, his certificate showing payment in full to have been made for the land on which the town was located.

Eleazar Aspinwall, who had bought out Abraham Markle, died in November of 1820, and, as his estate was believed to be insolvent and the company was in doubt to whom his interest was payable, his heirs gave a power of attorney to William C. Linton, August 31, 1821, under which he made a trust deed April 16, 1822, to Moses Hoggatt and Robert Sturgus, trustees under a deed of September 29, 1821, whereupon the trustees proceeded to execute deeds to the purchasers, many of whom had long before paid for their lots and had erected thereon houses, shops and stores in which the social and business life of the future city was beginning to be manifest.¹

¹ The references for this paper are to the *Deed Records* of Knox and Vigo counties. The records of the Canadian Volunteers are from the county *Plat Books*. The author has in his possession many of the old personal papers, including land patents.